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DIRECT ACTION MANUAL

A CALL FOR ARTICLES

The San Francisco Bay Area Web Collective is initiating a continental effort to write and produce a manual for direct action and street protest geared to the conditions of the 1990s.

Direct Action Manual: A Call for Articles

December 1992

The idea to produce a Direct Action Manual emerged in the spring of 1992 in the wake of the intensive police-state repression used to quell widespread rebellion following the racist verdict in Los Angeles. The imposition of martial law and massive police sweeps in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and elsewhere were a chilling reminder of the State's ability to crush domestic rebellion.

Street protests in the past several years have become both more frequent and more militant throughout North America. In the Bay Area, mini-rebellions occurred because of the Gulf War, People's Park, a gay rights bill veto, and the recent Rodney King verdict. Since May, 1992 there have been a number of flashpoints all over North America where people's rage has spilled over into a powerful force in the street.

The State and its agents of repression have certainly learned from the experience of the last few years. Coupled with the long term knowledge, since the 1960s, of containing domestic insurrection, the State has become quite effective in responding to any incipient uprising. The crackdown in May, 1992 is just a glimpse of the kind of police-state action to be expected as the United States collapses internally and people begin to rise up against continuing injustice.

To organize against the insidious sophistication of the State's repressive forces is a daunting and formidable task. Activists in the 1990s need to seriously re-evaluate current forms and consider more appropriate strategies and tactics. It is from within this context that this concept of a Direct Action Manual emerges.

There are contemporary examples of North American direct action handbooks from which we can glean information and use as models for this current project. The anti-nuclear movement of the late 1970s and early 1980s produced numerous handbooks for civil disobedience actions at nuclear power plants and nuclear weapons facilities. Similar handbooks were produced for mass actions at the Neveda Test Site and for environmental direct action campaigns, such as Redwood Summer in California in 1990.

These publications contain relevant material on subjects such as affinity groups, group dynamics, consensus decision-making, feminism and non-hierarchical organizational structures. A common thread, however, that runs through these earlier direct action handbooks, and one that this project will make a departure from, is the rigid ideology of non-violence. This Direct Action Manual will not eschew militancy and seeks to encompass a wide range of tactics. The intention is that this manual be written so that it can be broadly interpreted and applied to a number of different situations, transcending specific actions, issues, and geographical regions.

One of the primary goals of this project is to draw on the collective experience and current knowledge of anti-authoritarians engaged in radical protest in the streets, neighborhoods, and cities of North America and to impart this useful information to others in the form of a Direct Action Manual.

The Web Collective, a local Bay Area anarchist group, is coordinating this project and is urging publications, groups, organizers, and individuals from all over the continent to submit articles and offer support.

The Love & Rage Network, producer of the anarchist newspaper "Love & Rage," has become the first to endorse the Direct Action Manual at its November 1992 meeting in Atlanta. The Web Collective seeks the endorsement and involvement of other groups throughout North America.

One of our ideas is that within a year, a rough draft of the Direct Action Manual serve as a basis for a conference, at which time an editorial group could be selected and final decisions and arrangements for publication could be made.

The Web Collective wants the production of a Direct Action Manual to be a collaborative effort and needs to receive your constructive and deconstructive feedback. Please send us your comments, criticisms, and suggestions. In the form of a periodic discussion bulletin, we want to initiate an exchange of ideas and develop this project in a cooperative manner.

We especially want to start receiving draft submissions or finished copy. This manual will be an anthology from a number of contributors. Keep this in mind when thinking about article length. If possible send material on MacIntosh disks. The outline of suggested topics is a preliminary guide to the kinds of articles meant to be included and is by no means definitive.

We want other groups, publications, and collectives to endorse and support this project. This minimally means to help with outreach and publicity, to collect written material and send us copies, to make needed resources available, and to contribute money. Financial contributions can be made by sending tax deductible checks, payable to *The Aspect Foundation*.

We realize this project to produce a Direct Action Manual is very much in the beginning stages and that there is much room for growth and improvement. We hope that you find this interesting and look forward to your participation.

The Web Collective
P.O. Box 40890
San Francisco, CA 94110

Please pass this flyer on to other publications. An earlier version of this Call for Articles has already been sent to the following papers:
Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed, Arm The Spirit, Autonome Forum, Bayou La Rose, Earth First! Journal, Ecomedia Bulletin, Fifth Estate, Free Society, Ideas & Action, Industrial Worker, Kick It Over, Love & Rage, New Liberation News Service, Our Generation, Profane Existence, Slingshot, Social Anarchism, Steal The Fire, The Shadow, Wind Chill Factor, Z Magazine.

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Suggested Topics

These are suggested topics to be covered in the Direct Action Manual. This is not a definitive or complete list. We encourage people to send other suggestions.

Introduction • Analysis of the present social condition • The necessity of organized resistance • Future resistance in a repressive society

Organizing the Group • Affinity groups • Group process and dynamics • Anti-hierarchical structures

Coalition Building • Common ground • Organizational structure • Perils of Political Parties

Planning • Common Strategy • Media Resources • Outreach • Research

Demonstrations • Rallies • Marches • Security • Common sense • Negotiating with authorities?

Street Tactics • Anonymity • Avoiding arrest • Unarresting • Barricades • Blocking cameras • Diversions • Fighting Tactics • Communication • Medical • Mobility • Regrouping • Scouting • Bike Messengers

Direct Action • Blockades • Occupations • Sabotage • Strategic intervention

The Legal System • Arrest • Noncooperation • Arraignments • Trials • Jail • Solidarity

Agents of Repression • Crowd control • FBI • Current COINTELPRO Techniques • FEMA • National Guard • Police Surveillance • State Police • University Police

The Movement • Discussion on the various "isms" • The question of violence

Organizing the Region • Communication • Regional Information Networks • Joint Action • Federations • Autonomous Zones

Creating a Spectacle • Effigies• Music • Sound Noise • Puppets • Street theater

Our Own Media • Banners • Signs • Graffiti • Leaflets • Posters • Stickers • Newspapers

Technology • Computer • Fax • Radio • Transmitters • Telephone • Video• Xerox

The Direct Action Manual, a project of the Bay Area Web Collective, has recently been endorsed by The Love & Rage Network. Write to the address below, if you would also like to support this project. Please reprint and distribute this flyer, and send us articles!!! San Francisco Jan., 93

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